



NEWS

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CHP PAYS TRIBUTE TO COMMUNICATIONS OPERATORS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – When someone dials 911 it can be a matter of life or death. While these calls come in daily, Congress has designated the second full week of April of each year as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) would like to take this opportunity to thank the men and women who are at the receiving end of those often life-saving phone calls.

“Our employees who perform telecommunications duties serve as an indispensable link between our officers and the public, providing vital support and life-saving services,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow.

CHP dispatchers have challenging and stressful jobs as they handle the majority of California’s wireless 911 emergency calls, non-emergency calls, and are in constant radio communication with the patrol officers. Dispatchers are the first point of contact in an emergency to ensure the appropriate assistance is provided whether you have been in an injury-related crash or another emergency has occurred. Duties can range from contacting fire, ambulance or other emergency services to looking up vehicle identification numbers, plate numbers, driver license numbers and run checks for wanted subjects.

The CHP has 25 communication/dispatch centers statewide at which it employs nearly 1,000 telecommunicators. Last year, these individuals were responsible for handling approximately 10.3 million calls for service (911 and other calls).

Calling 911 can be very stressful and it's easy to feel overwhelmed. The following tips are designed to guide callers through the experience:

- No matter what happens – stay calm.
- Be prepared to provide your name, phone number, address or location and a detailed description of the incident you’re reporting.
- Wait for the call-taker to ask questions, and then answer clearly and calmly.
- Let the call-taker guide the conversation.
- Listen carefully and follow all directions provided by the call-taker.
- Keep your eyes open and be prepared to give physical descriptions if an emergency involves a criminal suspect.

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- Wireless phones may not tell the call-taker where you are. Use a landline whenever possible.
- Remember, 911 is for life-threatening emergencies. Misuse of the emergency 911 system could result in a delay for callers with actual emergencies and is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

“The public safety operators, public safety dispatchers and public safety dispatch supervisors who provide radio, telephone, and computer services to every CHP unit and the public are to be commended for their dedication and professionalism,” added Commissioner Farrow. “The reputation and image our department enjoys is due in large part to the excellent manner in which they perform their duties.”

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